

## **NEWPORT CITY COUNCIL – EDUCATION SERVICE**

### **Additional Learning Needs Out of County Placements report**

**FROM: Katy Rees**

**To: Scrutiny**

**RE:** The aim of this briefing paper is to provide clarity around the current situation regarding Out of County Specialist Placements.

#### **Specialist Additional Learning Needs Out of County Placements**

Pupils who require a specialist Out of County placement have a Statement of Special Educational Need for a complex Additional Learning Need for example Social, Emotional and Behaviour Difficulties (SEBD), Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), a Profound Hearing Impairment or Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD); which cannot be met within a local Newport provision either due to the pupils specific need or due to availability of a local placement. These pupils would have accessed some or all of the following before being considered by the Special Education Needs (SEN) Panel for an Out of County placement:

At Primary school age:

- Mainstream school with Teaching Assistant support
- Managed Move to another Primary School
- Learning Resource Base (LRB) within a primary school
- Learning Resource Base (LRB) within a primary school with additional support
- Bridge Achievement Centre (BAC) KS2 short term provision
- Catch 22 Independent KS2 specialist provision (Commissioned by Newport)
- Ysgol Bryn Derw (Specialist Autism Spectrum Disorder School)
- Maes Ebbw School (Special School)

At Secondary School age:

- Mainstream school with Teaching Assistant support
- Autism Spectrum Difficulties (ASD) Base at The John Frost School
- Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) Base at St. Julian's High School
- Bridge Achievement Centre (BAC) KS3 short term provision
- Managed Move to another Secondary School
- Bridge Achievement Centre KS3 & KS4 long term provision
- Newport Live Additional Learning Needs (ALN) group (Commissioned by Newport overseen by the Bridge Achievement Centre and the Out of County Officer.
- Ysgol Bryn Derw (Specialist Autism Spectrum Disorder School)
- Maes Ebbw School (Special School)

#### **Additional Types of Out of County Placements**

LAC pupils may require Out of County residential placements which are determined by Social Services. These pupils often have combined residential and education packages. Sometimes these placements have to be made quickly to ensure the safety of the pupil, however the education package is reviewed within six weeks to ensure its suitability to meet the pupils needs.

There are also pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs who are classed as Out of County because they attend a local mainstream School in another authority.

The table below illustrates the types of placements along with the number of pupils accessing the placements:

Placement	Number of Pupils
Residential	11
Specialist Out of County Day	63
LAC to Other LA's	4
Learning Resource Base	23
Mainstream	29

*Current data for September 2019*

### **Arranging an Out of County Placement**

Following the decision of Special Educational Needs or Complex Needs Panels, Officers from within the Special Educational Needs (SEN) / Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Team consult and work collaboratively with Out of County providers in order to assess, support and monitor the provision for pupils placed. There is a dedicated Special Educational Needs Officer allocated specifically to Out of County pupils to ensure a single, consistent point of contact. The Special Educational Needs Out of County Officer is responsible for challenging, evaluating and reviewing the practice of schools and the service they are delivering ensuring that expectations are met and the objectives within the Statement of Special Educational Needs is satisfied. Attendance records are requested from Independent providers on a weekly basis. Where new placements are made, a review is called within the first 12 weeks to ensure that the placement is appropriate and the pupils needs are being met. The Special Educational Needs Out of County Officer attends all annual reviews of pupils placed Out of County in order to ensure that provision remains appropriate and in line with the objectives identified within the pupils Statement of Special Educational Needs. This is in line with the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (COP) and the LA Statutory duties.

Where pupils are LAC, LA Officers attends LAC Education / Care Reviews under the guidance of the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) where appropriate. This will include the Special Educational Needs Out of County Officer and / or LAC Education co-ordinators alongside the dedicated Social Worker who hold Parental Responsibility for the pupil. LAC pupils are monitored separately by the LAC Education Co-ordinators in addition to the Special Educational Needs Out of County Officer.

### **Quality Assurance (QA) Process**

The Special Educational Needs Out of County Officer co-ordinates a *Quality Assurance* diary of visits to providers each year to ensure that provision remains appropriate and practice is in line with the LA's high expectations. This process is undertaken by all officers within the Inclusion Enrichment Team to ensure a critical evaluation of the setting and their responsibilities to the pupils in their care. The Quality Assurance process is a rolling annual process where each member of the Inclusion Enrichment team undertakes at least two reviews of Out of County providers with a specific focus on four key elements: Outcomes; Well-being; Safeguarding and Matching Need. A Quality Assurance Tool has been devised and is sent to each provider in advance of the Quality Assurance visit to complete. Upon return, the allocated officers review the responses and to devise their lines of enquiry review this. These are pursued with the provider during the Quality Assurance visit where a site

inspection of facilities is undertaken. Following completion of the Quality Assurance visit, the attending officers complete an Evaluation form where their evaluation of the provider and subsequent judgements are made. These fall into three categories – Red; Amber or Green. Varying actions are undertaken as a result of the RAG status.

### **Out of County Placements**

There has been a reduction in the number of Out of County placements made by the LA over the last three financial years and a further decrease is forecast for 2019-20:

<b>Financial Year:</b>	<b>Total No. of Out of County Placements over during the year:</b>	<b>No. of open Out of County Placements at the end of the financial year:</b>	<b>Average Placement Cost:</b>
2016-17	172	*	£21,778
2017-18	162	126	£30,407
2018-19	156	113	£34,775
2019-20 (at July 2019)	128	90	£30,000

*\*No. of open Out of County Placements at the end of the financial year were not captured before 2017-18*

There are a combination of factors that contributed to the reduction of Out of County placements:

1. Links with Social Services and the Contracts and Commissioning Team.
2. The commissioning of two local provisions - Newport Live for KS3 & 4 pupils and Catch 22 an Independent Provider for KS2 pupils.
3. The increase of pupils with Social, Emotional, Behaviour Difficulties accessing the Bridge Achievement Centre for long term placements.
4. Secondary Schools funding their own alternative provisions e.g. Aspire, Learning Support Centres etc.
5. Increase in Learning Resource Bases in Primary Schools
6. Ysgol Bryn Derw increasing their published pupil numbers from 48 to 56.

### **Links with Social Services and the Contracts and Commissioning Team**

Close links have been developed between Social Services and the Education Department to ensure co-ordinated support for our most vulnerable pupils. Through the monthly Brighter Futures and Complex Needs Panel pupils at risk of placement breakdown are discussed in detail and joint solutions are considered to try to reduce the need for an Out of County placement.

Since April 2019 a Special Educational Needs Officer has been based within the Social Services contracts and commissioning team for two days per week to review the contractual agreements with Out of County providers and their compliance. This process also relates to placement fees and conditions that are subject to on-going negotiation in order to achieve the most appropriate provision for the pupil in the most cost effective way. This joint working has also led to four pupils returning to live in local residential placements and be educated locally

at a reduced cost for both service areas. A joint service protocol and panel has been developed to identify further pupils who could return to local placements in the future.

### **Commissioning of Local Provisions - Newport Live & Catch 22**

The Education Department commissioned two alternative providers Catch 22 and Newport Live in 2016 to extend the provision available locally for pupils with Social, Emotional and Behaviour Difficulties. Catch 22 is an independent education provider for KS2 pupils which is inspected by ESYN. They have been commissioned to provide 12 KS2 long term placements, however pupils are continually reviewed and if deemed appropriate move back to a mainstream provision. Newport Live has been commissioned for 12 KS3 & KS4 pupils who have either returned from Out of County provisions or to prevent an Out of County placement due to the pupils needs not able to be met by any other local provision. The education aspect of Newport Live is overseen by the Bridge Achievement Centre. Both provisions are monitored by a Special Educational Needs Officer through weekly attendance updates and monthly/termly pupil reports in line with our Quality Assurance timetable.

### **Bridge Achievement Centre (BAC)**

The Bridge Achievement Centre is our local Pupil Referral Unit however they also co-ordinate bespoke learning packages for our long term pupils with Social, Emotional Behaviour Difficulties whether they display more challenging behaviours or medical anxious disorders. For clarification a long term placement is one that exceeds 8 weeks, a number of pupils accessing placements surpass 24 weeks. The Bridge Achievement Centre is spread over four sites across the city which are specific to either age group or pupil need. The Bridge Achievement Centre supports KS2, KS3 and KS4 pupils. Preventative Services, the Youth Offending Team and the LAC Education Officers work very closely with the provision to ensure appropriate support is made available to both pupils and their families. All pupils are carefully monitored to ensure they are making progress both emotionally and academically. If suitable pupils will either return to mainstream school, remain at the Bridge Achievement Centre or transition to the Newport Live provision.

### **Secondary Exclusions and provision**

The majority of pupils with Social, Emotional and Behaviour Difficulties are within mainstream schools. Over the last 5 years, there has been a concerted effort to support Secondary Schools to review their behaviour management systems, develop inclusive practices and reduce exclusions. As the exclusion data below demonstrates Schools have significantly reduced the number of days lost to exclusions during this period although there was an increase in the number of incidents in 2017/2018:

<b>Academic Year</b>	<b>Number of Incidents</b>	<b>Number of Days Lost</b>
2014/15	1000	2167
2015/16	830	1594
2016/17	744	1367
2017/18	806	1343.5
2018/19 (unverified data)	745	1204.5

Secondary Schools have been proactive in creating both on and off site provisions to meet the needs of their Additional Learning Needs pupils in particular pupils with Social, Emotional and Behaviour Difficulties. A number of Secondary Schools have retained Learning Support Centres to support pupils with behaviour difficulties and three Schools have developed offsite provisions in collaboration with the Youth Service for their more challenging pupils with Social, Emotional and Behaviour Difficulties called “Aspire”. “Aspire” offers a mix of GCSEs combined with less traditional qualifications based on the needs of the group. The staffing structure is a blend of teachers from their School, professionally qualified youth workers and youth support workers. All pupils who access these provisions remain on school roll and are monitored carefully by designated school staff.

### Learning Resource Bases (LRB)

Learning Resource Bases are small group provisions for 10 pupils held within 14 Primary Schools across the city. These bases have a high staff ratio to ensure the individual needs of the pupils are met. One of our Bases is a Specific Language Impairment Base for the region the other 13 bases are generic for pupils with Additional Learning Needs which are unable to have their needs met within a mainstream classroom full time. The Learning Resource Bases work flexibly to ensure pupils who are able link with their mainstream peers for certain lessons to develop both their social interaction and the focussed teaching for their level of ability. There has been a shortage of Learning Resource Base places over the last 3 years however with the opening of Learning Resource Bases at Caerleon Lodge Primary and Glan Llyn Primary in September there will be capacity for 200 pupils.

Academic Year	Learning Resource Base Capacity	No of pupils placed	Surplus/(Deficit) No. of Placements
2013 / 14	192	149	+43
2014 / 15	172	155	+17
2015 / 16	182	169	+23
2016 / 17	172	184	-12
2017 / 18	170	184	-14
2018/ 19*	170 <i>(increase to 180 as of 01.04.2019 with opening of Caerleon Lodge Primary)</i>	184	-14
2018/19	180	184	-4
Sept 2019	200	195 (2 further placements being considered)	+5* (+3)

*\*Whilst based on overall capacity, plus 5 is being shown, there still remains a total of 11 places available as some Learning Resource Bases are over number in order to accommodate catchment children.*

### Autistic Spectrum Disorder placements (ASD)

Due to the opening of a 48 place specialist Autism Spectrum Disorder School Ysgol Bryn Derw in 2017 and the expansion of The John Frost Autism Spectrum Disorder Base to 20 places there has been a decrease in Autism Spectrum Disorder placements at both Maes Ebbw and Out of County. Ysgol Bryn Derw has enable the authority to further reduce Autistic Spectrum Disorder Out of County placements. The reduction of pupils with Autism Spectrum Disorder at

Maes Ebbw has also enabled the school to take increased numbers of pupils with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties, reducing the need for Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties Out of County placements. One pupil has returned to Newport from an Out of County placements saving an annual cost of £25k. Kimberley Communication Class also increased to 16 placements in 2018, this reduced the pressure on nursery Autism Spectrum Disorder placements, however the pupils attending the class have needs that are more complex and will require Foundation Phase placements at either Meas Ebbw or Ysgol Bryn Derw putting further pressure on those schools. A successful Integrated Care Fund bid has enabled a £300k refurbishment of the Gaer Annexe in January 2020 to transform it into a 12 place tertiary department for Ysgol Bryn Derw. This expansion will enable pupils from their main site to transition to the tertiary site, freeing up foundation phase placements for the Kimberley pupils to transition expanding Ysgol Bryn Derw to 68 placements.

### **Next Steps:**

- Maintain the rigorous Out of County Quality Assurance evaluation process to confirm suitability of provisions.
- Ensure appropriate local provision is available to reduce the need for Out of County Placements.
- To continue to work closely with the Contracts and Commissioning Team to review the contractual agreements with Out of County providers and their compliance, in order to achieve the most appropriate provision for the pupil in the most cost effective way.
- Carefully monitor data trends and proactively assesses any future gaps in provision as part of the Planning of School Placements Forum.